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ABSTRACT

This brief handout set begins with a scenario of a baseball game, during which one child swings a bat at another child. Hostility in the classroom and in life is a daily game. More than 30% of new teachers leave within the first five years of teaching; the primary cause is dissatisfaction with student discipline, hostile behavior of children, and inability to control the class. "What is a Bully?" provides characteristics of bullies. "Empowering the Teacher" provides behavior management skills information. "Empowering Victims" discusses skills that victims can develop to stop abusive behavior. "Empowering Bullies" provides insight into the needs of bullies and procedures for turning around the negative behavior. "Empowering the Class" discusses peer influence and conflict management teams. A quote from Ennis Cosby and a picture of him with Bill Cosby is provided. Recommended readings, a guide to resources, references, and cartoons are included. (EMK)

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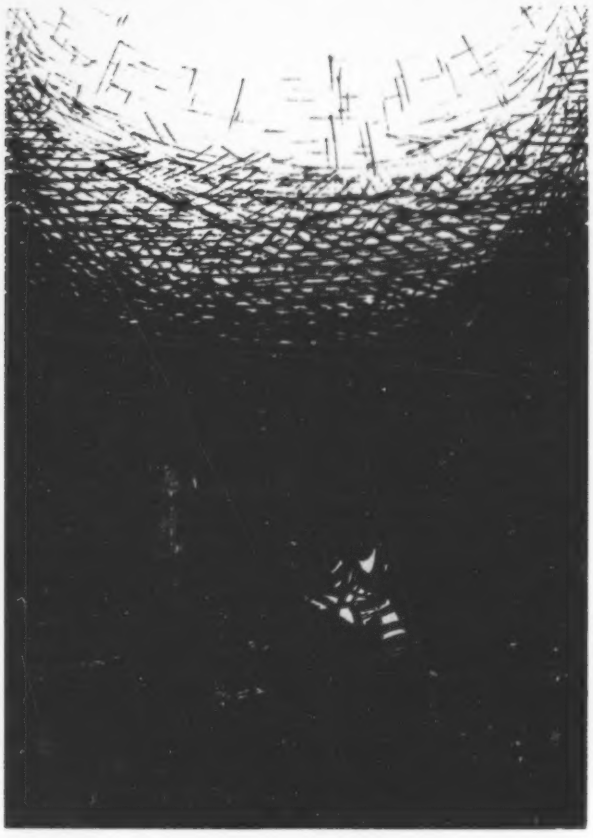
NIPPIN' HOSTILITY IN THE BUD
EMPOWERING ALL



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***Adapted from "Tending to the Emotional Needs of Teachers and Students: Tricks of the Trade"**
Katherine L. Lauderdale B.A., Jerry L. Roberson B.A., and Carlos A. Bonilla, Ph.D., Editors

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NIPPIN' HOSTILITY IN THE BUD

EMPOWERING ALL

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Blue sky, warm sun, happy kids - it's a great day for baseball. Robert, a fifth grader, steps up to bat. He swings, **"Strike One!"** The ten year old umpire calls out. Robert frowns and swings at the next pitch - harder this time **"Strike Two!"** His pal, Carlos, calls out from behind the plate. The batter grasps the bat harder, narrows his eyes as anger begins to swell inside him, swings at the third pitch then hears the dreaded words. **"Strike Three!"** The fourth swing came without warning as Robert, enraged, swung the bat towards the head of his best friend, Carlos, narrowly missing. This time Robert was lucky, but what will happen the next time he becomes enraged?

More than 30% of new teachers leave within the first five years of teaching.

Empower All

This game of hostility is played in the classroom daily, if we think back to our childhood we remember the games at recess, friends, and teachers, even the bullies. Every class had at least one kid who picked on the shy, withdrawn, and weaker children. These bullies were constantly pushing the other children around, calling them names, sometimes physically harming them. This behavior can be a nightmare for both victims and teachers, disruptive and aggravating. Research shows over 30 percent of new teachers leave the profession within the first five years. The primary cause is dissatisfaction with student discipline, hostile behavior of children, and the teacher's inability to control the class. We need tools to empower everyone to nip this hostility in the bud.

What is a Bully?

This child tries to scare, intimidate, or physically harm other classmates on a regular basis. Boys and girls exhibit this type of behavior. Boys tend to show more physical, direct forms of bullying: fist fights, taunting, and physically threatening others. Girls, on the other hand, bully in more indirect ways, such as manipulating friendships, ostracizing classmates, and spreading malicious rumors. Boys pick on either gender, girls usually only on girls. Nationwide nine percent of boys and two percent of girls, under the age of eighteen, are bullies. They exist in all neighborhoods, ethnicities and socioeconomic classes. Studies show children act in this manner primarily because of their family environment. Children who come from a home where physical and emotional abuse is common, a family member is in prison, psychotic or in a psychiatric hospital tend to be more prone to exhibit "bullying" type of behavior.

Background characteristics of bullies:

- Family environment
- Physical/emotional abuse in the home
- A family member in prison
- A family member is psychotic
- A family member is in a psychiatric hospital

Teachers observe it everyday and are called to stop hostility from escalating or even occurring. The statistics are alarming. Grade schools boys who are highly impulsive, and always getting into trouble, are three to six times more likely than self-disciplined children to engage in violent behavior by the time they reach their teens. Girls with similar traits are three times more likely to become pregnant as teens. And grade school girls who cannot distinguish between anger, anxiety, boredom, and hunger are more at risk of developing eating disorders. A recent Justice Department report predicts the number of young people arrested for violent crimes will double over the next 15 years to an exorbitant number: **260,000 annually!** Devoting our lives to training youth, we must join

together to beat these astronomic odds. As teachers we must:

- Strengthen victims so they are able to lessen the bullies' opportunities
- Provide bullies with strategies for overcoming hostility
- Help the 85% of children who are neither bullies nor victims

WE MUST EMPOWER ALL!!

Bullying begins in elementary school, peaks in the middle grades and decreases in high school. It never disappears.

Empowering the Teacher

Teachers who exhibit successful management skills create a sense of "community" in the classroom where children *want* to do their best. Keeping a positive learning atmosphere is a constant challenge, something we observed when visiting several well-managed classrooms. Consider:

- A consistent behavioral management system
- Clear and simple rules/rights, "I have the right to be happy and treated with kindness."
- Consequences. Clear expectations which define these consequences. Children make choices and need to learn to think before they act.
- Behavioral contracts. Students need motivating incentives rewarding them for proper behavior. A tracking program allows them to see their day-to-day progress.

Classrooms where these skills were enforced exhibited the highest learning capability. Students displayed learning motivation, social responsibility, and self respect.

C.H.O.iC.E.s

- **Command:** Give clear directions and specifically state what you want the child to do.
- **Humor or Surprise:** Use non-sarcastic humor or do the unexpected to defuse an explosive situation.
- **Offer Choices:** Give a choice between two options.
- **Compromise:** Seek a middle ground that partially satisfies both parties.
- **Encourage problem solving:** Work together to explore the disagreement. Generate alternatives, and find a solution that satisfies both parties.

Empowering Victims

Studies show that *victims* of bullies need to develop skills to counter abusive behavior, or they in turn will develop the same angry, impulsive and violent behavior to which they were subjected. Cherry Creek School in Denver, Colorado has implemented a "HA-HA-SO" program to give victims effective tools to deal with bullies. Deciphering the acronym:

- **Help**- Give it or get it.
- **Assert**- Tell them to stop making fun of you!
- **Humor**- Be able to laugh with them.
- **Avoid**- Walk away
- **Self-talk**-Use encouraging words to build up your self-esteem.
- **Own it**- Try to understand why a statement was made and clarify if necessary.

We need to encourage the victims to increase their own self-worth in order to rid themselves of the bullies.

Empowering Bullies

Preposterous but true; bullies need power too! Not power to do more harm , but power to change. We can effectively help by raising their level of emotional intelligence, promoting self-esteem, providing reinforcement, and developing one-on-one relationships. Unlike IQ, the EQ, or emotional quotient, can be taught. Emotional intelligence is the level of ability with which we can properly and effectively handle our emotions. We must teach the basics of it:

- Anger control
- Conflict resolution
- Naming and owing feelings
- Being responsible
- Learning impulse control
- Choosing the best emotional response to touchy situations.

"Kind words can be short and easy to speak, but their echoes are truly endless."
Mother Teresa

Research shows students who raised their EQ became better at handling frustration, anger, stress and anxiety. They became less impulsive, more cooperative and exhibited an overall improvement in behavior. We must provide these children the skills to react emotionally in an appropriate and socially acceptable manner.

When children perceive teachers to be caring, positive and believing they can reach their highest potential they, themselves, respond in a positive way. A fourth grade "used-to-be-bully" was asked "What has helped you change?" His response:

"I feel better about myself and I like who I am now. I'm nice to myself and understanding of the problems I have. The teacher really cares for me and makes sure things are fair and that other kids treat me kindly. I like the behavior tracking program I'm on. I don't care about the prizes anymore, I just care how I feel inside when I do my best. I feel GOOD!"

Perhaps the late Ennis Cosby stated it best:

> ***I was teaching from the heart, and the kids biggest need seemed to be a teacher who cared about them and their individual needs.***

Empowering the Class

Peer influence is a powerful force and, if used effectively, it can be one of the strongest intervention strategies. Teachers are aware of the effects of bully behavior:

- violent outbursts of rage
- emotional and physical pain
- spreading conflict around

Various districts are now setting up conflict/management teams within the schools. Students with good behavior and leadership skills attend an on-site mini workshop and learn to deal with conflicts likely to arise on the school playground and in the classroom. One such program is **CARE:**

- **Creative** problem solving
- **Adult** help
- **Relate** and join in to encourage
- **Empathy**

As supervisors of appropriate behavior these children are called on whenever conflicts arise. By empowering us all with effective intervention strategies, hostility can be nipped in the bud so bullies find themselves in a world where they simply do not fit in.

"I may not remember what you said, but I will always remember how you made me feel."

"I work with kids and try to make them feel that I understand them. I am very stern on good morals and manners. . . I just believe in respect, honesty, and truthfulness. . . I believe that stability starts inside and then reflects out of a person."

Bill and Ennis Cosby at a 1994 New York Knicks game. Ennis Cosby's life was taken by a young man who was not able to deal with his own hostility.

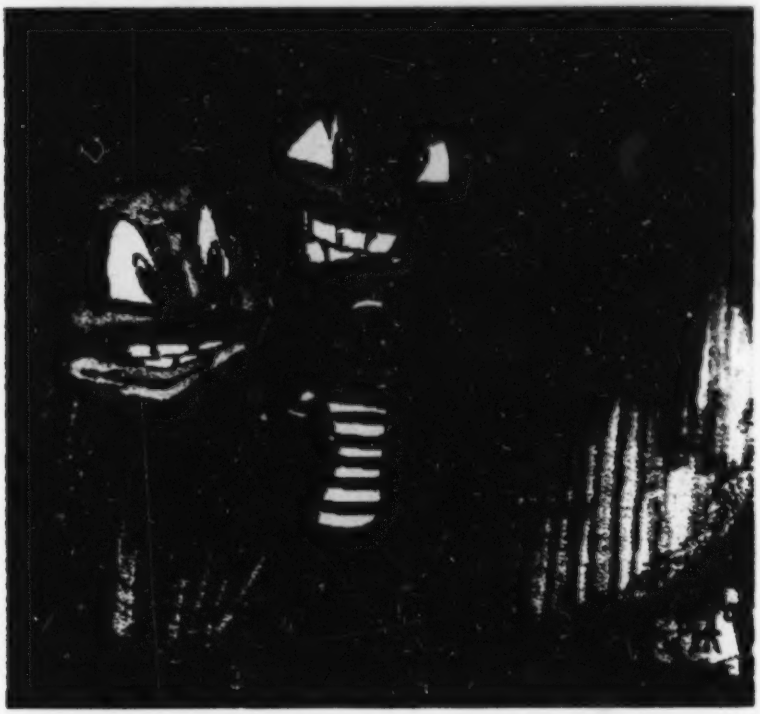
Teachers: Are you having a BULLY PROBLEM? We Recommend:

Bully-Proofing Your School: by Carla Garrity, Kathryn Jens, William Porter, Nancy Sager, and Cam Short-Camilli, 1996: $29.95 Contact: Sopris West, 1140 Boston Ave,. Longmont, CO 80501, (303) 651-2829.

Bullying at School: What We Know and What We Can Do. by Dan Olweus, 1993: $ 19.95 Contact; Blackwell Publishers, P.O. Box 20, Williston, VT. O5495; (800) 216-2522.

The Bullying Prevention Handbook: A Guide for Principals, Teachers and Counselors. by John Hoover and Ronald Oliver, 1996, $21.95. Contact: National Education Service, 1252 Loesch Rd. , Bloomington, IN 47402. (812) 336-7700, or (800) 733-6786.

Bully Proof: A Teacher's Guide on Teasing and Bullying for Use With Fourth and Fifth Grade Students. by Nan Stein, Lisa Sjostrom, and Emily Gaberman. 1996, $19.95, plus $5.00 shipping and handling. Contact: Center for Women, Publication. Wellesley College, 106 Central Street, Wellesley College, 106 Central St. Wellesley, MA 02181; (617) 283-2532.



Guide to Resources

Complete guide to bully proofing: 1-800-547-6747
Bully Hotline: 1-800-NO-BULLY (set up by Attorney General Charles Condon)

Anti-defamation League: A World of Difference Program
823 United Nations Plaza (212)-885-7810
New York, NY 10017 (212)-490-0187 (Fax)

Children's Creative Response to Conflict:
P.O. Box 271 (914) 353-1796
Nyack, NY 10960 (914) 358-4924 (Fax)

Conflict Resolution & Coop Learning Center
Peacemakers Program, University of Minnesota/Education and Human Development
60 Peik Hall, 159 Pillsbury Drive: SE. (612) 624-7031
Minneapolis, MN 55455 (612) 626-1395 (Fax)

Educators for Social Responsibility
21 Garden Street (617) 492-1764
Cambridge, Massachusetts (617) 864-5164 (Fax)

International Center for Cooperation and Conflict Resolution
Teachers College at Columbia University
525 West 120th Street Box 53 (212) 466-6272
New York, NY 10027 (212) 678-4048 (Fax)

National Crime Prevention Council
1700 K Street, NW, Second Floor (202) 466-6272
Washington, DC 20006-3817 (202) 296-1356 (Fax)

National Institute for Dispute Resolution-National Association for Meditation
1726 M. Street, NW, Suite 500 (202) 466-4764
Washington, DC 20036-4502 (202) 466-4769 (Fax)

National School Safety Center
4165 Thousand Oaks Blvd. Suite 290 (805) 373-9977
Westlake Village, CA 91362 (805) 373-9277 (Fax)

Resolving Conflict Creatively Program-National Center
163 Third Ave, P.O. Box 103 (212) 387-0225
New York, NY 10003 (2122) 387-0510 (Fax)

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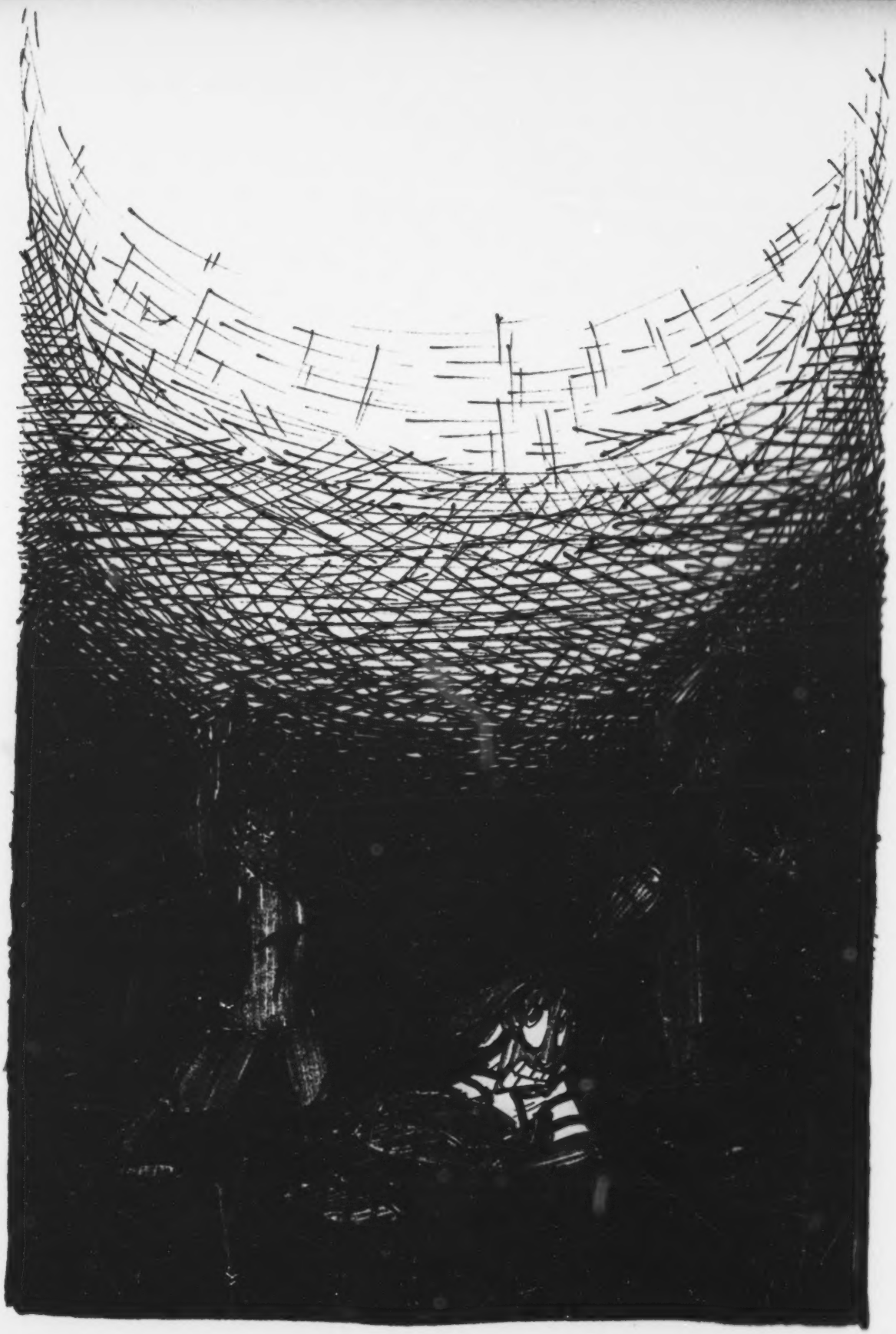

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